

THE SENTINEL



OFFICIAL SAFETY NEWSLETTER OF CIVIL AIR PATROL

We Have the Policies, Let's Educate and Enforce!

Accidents are often caused by individuals or teams failing to follow a plan or rule. These failures may result from improper or incomplete planning or execution of the mission plan.

Some of these failures are around us everyday. We accept them as a normal or standard procedure. As shown in the old "accident chain" theory, these failures only become evident when they mix with certain other failures. When enough of these combine, the strain breaks the weakest link.

As managers, we must set the example. We must make our safety standards understood at all levels of operations and we must practice those standards. We make our standards known through regulations, interim

change letters and checklists. Now we must take an active roll in enforcing and demanding compliance with those standards. The 18-month expiration date printed on aircraft CO detectors is no excuse to disregard the 12 month change requirement in CAPR 66-1. Units that only enforce those standards that are convenient, or that do not hinder the current mission, are setting themselves up for a fall.

Managers must set the standard both formally and informally. If you value safety, make it your priority. When you do a risk assessment, think of the consequences of disregarding our standards and how you are going to justify them in an accident investigation.

Col John Tilton, CAP/SE

Hangar Rash Update

In last month's *Sentinel*, we reviewed some hangar rash incidents and examples for helping to prevent this from happening in your unit. I have received some additional suggestions that I would like to share with you. SM John Goodier points out that if we are to taxi slowly so should we when we back our aircraft into a hangar. Lt Col Tom Baldwin's squadron has a hangar with an incline. They installed an electric

winch, using squadron funds, that easily pulls the aircraft along painted strips leading the wheels to stationary chocks fastened to the hangar floor. Finally, Col Stan Leibowitz, former National General Counsel, suggests bolting or gluing an angle iron just outside the desired path of the main landing gear to keep them the aircraft in the "safe" zone.

Thank you for the suggestions.

Maj Larry Mattiello, CAP



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Distractions!

As our efforts to maintain a positive safety culture continue, a review of distractions and how they can affect safety is the focus of this month's *Sentinel*. Random House's *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* defines distractions as:

1. The act of distracting
2. The state of being distracted
3. Mental distress or derangement
4. That which distracts, divides attention, or prevents concentration
5. That which amuses, entertains, or diverts
6. Division or disorder caused by dissension; tumult

And what I like are the synonyms:

1. Madness
2. Lunacy
3. Insanity
4. Craziness

How many times have we felt distracted before a flight? What is important is for you to identify any of the symptoms of distraction that may be a safety hazard to your flight. This is why we teach sterile cockpit procedures and crew resource management. These principles are designed to minimize distractions and reduce the risk of an accident occurring.

There are many stories we can share that exemplify accidents due to distraction. I remember one year ago at a local airport where two CFIs were checking each other out in a single engine retractable aircraft. After being distracted by discussions about different aspects of the flight, neither one of them remembered to lower the gear for landing. Yep, geared up and scraped down the runway.

Then there is the classic example of

the Eastern Airlines L1011 that had an improper nose gear light indication. The crew was distracted by the problem. Their divided attention or prevented concentration allowed the airliner to descend into the Everglades at night with fatal results.

Another recent distraction example is the Cory Lidle accident in NYC. According to the recently published NTSB report, the "amuses, entertains, or diverts" distraction definition may have been in play here. Evidence suggests that a 180 degree turn during the "sightseeing" fun flight in Manhattan's East River VFR corridor may have been exacerbated by the speed, wind, and location of the turn and was perpetuated by the diversion of the crew's attention to the city sights resulting in the aircraft hitting a building.

Managing distraction by staying focused with the task at hand will minimize risk and allow you to conduct safe operations of any aircraft or vehicle. Maintaining a sterile cockpit before each flight and briefing your crew to minimize or cease all talking not required to the flight and being well prepared for the mission before you enter the cockpit will help to keep you focused. The use of checklists before, during and after each flight will definitely keep your attention tuned to the flight parameters and help keep distraction from increasing your chance of errors.

Additional awareness of your physical condition due to stress, fatigue, medication, proficiency, experience or challenges of the mission profile is key. Knowing how you feel or what you know will be the first factor in minimizing or preventing distraction from ending a good intention from turning into a bad, or even fatal, experience.

Maj Larry Mattiello, CAP

Mobile Phones

In keeping with my distraction theme this month, another cause for concern is the use of mobile phones while driving. This is something I know we all have done or do while operating a motor vehicle. We owe it to our passengers, our families and ourselves to be as safe as possible and arrive at our destination accident free. However, studies have constantly shown that the single leading distraction causing vehicle accidents is the use of mobile phones while driving. Distraction it is not limited just to dialing and manipulating the phone, but also includes the engagement in conversation taking away our awareness of what is happening around us.

The risk associated with the use of mobile phones was highlighted in the news during July of the death of three young women in upstate New York who were involved in a fatal head on collision with a truck. What is interesting concerning this accident is the authorities have actual records of the time and length of the calls right up to time of the accident. It highlights the active use of the mobile phone right to the point of collision.

In addition to dialing and speaking on a mobile phone, the increasing use of e-mail or text messaging while driving magnifies the danger. Not only is your attention diverted away from handling a motor vehicle, but your eyes become fixated for a longer period of time to read such messages and even perhaps to type responses!

As I prepared for this report, I was amazed at how many studies have been conducted to highlight the dangers of mobile phones and the distractions caused by this use leading to an accident. It is not the mobile phone itself, but the distraction or lack of

concentration caused by the conversation that leads to an accident. That brings up an interesting point that still is currently being debated among industry experts. Is the use of hands free devices any safer a means of mobile phone use while driving? Jeffrey Runge, an NHTSA administrator, stated to the *Wall Street Journal* in 2004 that the "thing that disturbs me is that we have states and local municipalities making rules that basically give hands free phones a free pass as being safe. That's not good policy."

There are many challenges to this safety issue, especially from the automobile industry and the phone company suppliers. Regardless of the results of these lobby group efforts, the fact still remains that your risk increases substantially when being distracted while driving and the use of mobile phones is one of the leading distractions. Some safety websites explain that drivers on mobile phones are twice as likely to miss a traffic signal and their reaction time is slower to signals they do detect. Their risk of causing a crash is increased by 400%, which is the same as if the driver were legally intoxicated while driving.

Using the hands free equipment does not improve driver performance. It is the phone conversation that distracts! To be safe and protect those in your care while driving, pull over to use a phone, e-mail or text message. Keep your eyes on the road and your head to the task at hand. If you have a passenger, let them use the phone.

For more information on mobile phone safety, Google "cell phone safety" and a wealth of government and private websites will abound.

Maj Larry Mattiello, CAP

Summary of CAPFs 78 Received at NHQ CAP for June 2007

Aircraft

Cadet solo misjudged turn and rolled aircraft on the grass.

Glider on final approach settled too early striking approach end of runway.

After landing it was noticed that the cowling had become loose and was touching the propeller.

Pilot pushed aircraft into hangar; left elevator tip contacted hangar wall; with damage to left elevator tip.

Aircraft being pulled out of hangar with tow bar when left wing leading edge contacted hangar door.

Aircraft cylinder blew during O-flight; pilot declared emergency and landed safely. Main tire blew on landing.

Aircraft suffered tail strike with damage to tie down ring during full stall full flap landing.

After landing long the left main landing gear struck a threshold light.

Hard landing; prop strike.

Aircraft was being pushed backwards into the hangar. Elevators contacted parked vehicle bending the trailing edge of each elevator.

During aircraft tie down training, damage noted to the right aileron.

Tow hook bent due to undetermined cause.

Prop found to be grooved on the back of the blade and slightly bowed during

preflight.

Bodily Injury

Cadet underwent decontamination at training with cold water; began to shake, taken to hospital by EMS.

SM fell while ascending stairs, hit head on stair. Transported to hospital, required six stitches.

SM received two tick bites; diagnosed with Lyme disease, proper medical treatment being received.

Prospective cadet visiting at drill pad passed out and fell to tarmac; cut his chin and hand.

Cadet caught volley ball in odd manner; possible broken finger.

SM struck in right cheek bone, under eye by hard end of extension cord.

Cadet exiting dinning hall tripped and dislocated shoulder.

Cadet was on obstacle course and dropped from approximately 3 feet, twisting his foot.

Cadet was on obstacle course, stepped in hole and twisted right ankle.

Cadet injured on obstacle course (horizontal bars) and landed on left wrist; diagnosed with a buckle fracture.

SM tripped on stairs, injuries appear to be a fractured right wrist and possible cracked rib.